

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 16 has been amended, and new claim 39 has been added. Claims 1-7, 9-22, and 24-39 are pending. Reconsideration of all of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

The Office Action restricts claims 1-38 into Group I (Claims 1-7, 9, 15, 21, 22, and 24); Group II (Claims 10-14 and 31-38); and Group III (Claims 16-20 and 25-30). On page 3, the Office Action constructively elects claims Group I (Claims 1-7, 9, 15, 21, 22, and 24) and withdraws unelected claims 10-14, 16-20, and 25-38 (Groups II and III) from consideration.

Applicant amends independent claim 16 to delete "passing through the washing machine." Accordingly, Applicant requests rejoinder of Group III (Claims 16-20 and 25-30) with Group I claims and consideration of claims 16-20 and 25-30.

Because the method claims of Group II have already been examined, Applicant respectfully submits that further examination of the method claims would not be unduly burdensome. Therefore, rejoinder and reconsideration of the method claims of Group II is respectfully requested.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1 AND 4-5 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S Patent 5,887,456 issued to Tanigawa et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Tanigawa"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Tanigawa does not disclose, teach or suggest at least, "a controller to calculate a temperature difference between the initial detected temperature and the final detected temperature for each set section, and to determine whether an end of a drying process is reached based on a comparison of at least two temperature differences of two set sections," as recited in claim 1.

Instead, Tanigawa teaches finishing the drying operation when a temperature detected by the exhausted air temperature sensor 8 or detected by the intake air temperature sensor 10 has reached or exceeded a pre-selected temperature (column 10, lines 16-29). Further, Tanigawa does not disclose, teach or suggest calculating a temperature "**difference**" between the initial detected temperature and the final detected temperature for each set section in determining whether to end a drying process based on a comparison of "at least two

temperature differences of two set sections." Therefore, for at least these reasons, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited reference.

On page 12, the Office Action further asserts that the air exhaust temperature and air intake temperature can be broadly construed to anticipate the argued feature because both represent temperature differences. This assertion is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Tanigawa compares a pre-selected temperature with a temperature detected by the a detected exhausted air temperature sensor 8 or detected by the intake air temperature sensor 10. Therefore, Tanigawa is comparing a detected temperature with a pre-selected temperature. In contrast, claim 1 recites, "a controller to calculate a temperature difference between the initial detected temperature and the final detected temperature for each set section,...." Therefore, claim 1 is patentably distinguishable from Tanigawa.

Claims 4 and 5 depend from claim 1 and include all the features of that claim plus additional features, which are not taught or suggested by the cited reference. Therefore, for at least these reason, claims 4 and 5 also patentably distinguish over the cited reference.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 2-3 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 2-3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanigawa in view of U.S. Patent 6,161,306 issued to Clodic. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Clodic does not cure the deficiencies of Tanigawa. Claims 2-3 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features, which are not taught or suggested by the cited references.

For example, Tanigawa and Clodic, taken separately or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest "a controller to calculate a temperature difference between the initial detected temperature and the final detected temperature for each set section, and to determine whether an end of a drying process is reached based on a comparison of at least 2 temperature differences of two set sections," as recited in claim 1. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 2 and 3 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 6-9 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,806,204 issued to Hoffman et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Hoffman") in view of Tanigawa. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hoffman and Tanigawa, taken separately or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest at least, "the controller determines whether the end of the drying process is reached by detecting the water temperature at regular drying time intervals using the water temperature detecting unit, and comparing an accumulated temperature difference, which is calculated by accumulating temperature differences obtained in set sections, with a set value," as recited in claim 6.

Hoffman discloses conductivity sensors for measuring moisture content of a material such as clothes to be dried. Temperature probes are used to measure various temperatures and pressure sensors to measure pressure inside the chamber containing the clothes (column 3, lines 20-40). As indicated in column 5, lines 21-24, Hoffman discloses that sensors 38 can be used to monitor the time of operation or automatically determine the length of operation by determining moisture content, pressure and temperature of the chamber.

However, Hoffman does not disclose, teach or suggest at least, "comparing an accumulated temperature difference, which is calculated by accumulating temperature differences obtained in set sections, with a set value," as recited in claim 6. Instead, Hoffman indicates that the temperature of the chamber containing the clothes is monitored and that the temperature may control the length of operation for the time needed to complete a drying cycle. (column 4, line 66 - column 5, line 3 and column 5, lines 22-24).

Therefore, Hoffman does not teach or suggest accumulating "temperature differences" and "comparing the accumulated temperature differences" with a set value as provided in claim 6. Tanigawa does not cure the deficiencies of Hoffman. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claim 6 patentably distinguishes from the cited references.

Claim 8 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In addition, claims 7 and 9 depend from claim 6 and include the features of claim 6 plus additional features not taught or suggested by the cited reference. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 7 and 9 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

REJECTION OF CLAIM 15 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Clodic in view of Tanigawa. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Clodic and Tanigawa, taken separately or in combination, does not disclose, teach or suggest at least, "a controller to calculate a temperature difference between the initial detected temperature and the final detected temperature for each set section, and to terminate a drying

process according to a comparison of at least two temperature differences of two set sections," as recited in claim 15.

Clodic discloses determining an end of a drying operation using a temperature measured from probe 28 mounted at an inlet of the enclosure 1, temperature probe 29 mounted at the outlet of the enclosure 1, and a level sensor 16, which measures the level of condensed water in the condensate recuperator 17 (col. 4, lines 42-52). However, Clodic does not disclose, teach or suggest at least , "a comparison of at least two temperature differences of two set sections," which are used to determine whether an end of a drying process is reached.

Tanigawa does not cure the deficiencies of Clodic. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claim 15 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 21, 22, and 24 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 21, 22, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being patentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,250,628 issued to Smith et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Smith") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,228,212 issued to Turetta et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Turetta") in further view of Tanigawa. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Smith, Turetta, and Tanigawa, taken separately or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest at least, "the controller determines whether to terminate the drying process by detecting the temperature of the condensed water at regular time intervals using the temperature detector, and comparing accumulated temperature differences, which are accumulated over corresponding ones of the regular time intervals, with a set value," as recited in claim 21.

Instead, Smith teaches termination drying when electrical feedback from a solid state microwave array indicates that the radiation from the array is being absorbed at a reduced rate in the drying chamber (column 9, lines 65-68).

In contrast, Turetta discloses monitoring and controlling a drying operation in accordance with a quantity of water present in at least one of two levels 15 and 19 (column 3, line 35-40).

Applicant respectfully submits that one having ordinary skill in the art would not have combined an electrical feedback from a solid state microwave array of Smith with a drying operation controlled by the quantity of water present in at least one of two vessels 15 and 19 as taught by Turetta.

Further, Tanigawa does not cure the deficiencies of Smith and Turetta. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claim 21 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Claims 22 and 24 depend from claim 21 and include all the features of that claim plus

additional features which are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 22 and 24 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Summary

Claims 1-7, 9-22, and 24-39 are pending. It is respectfully submitted that none of the references taken alone or in combination disclose the present claimed invention.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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